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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ZAGREB 001909

SIPDIS

VIENNA ALSO FOR BOSNIA; USVIENNA ALSO FOR USDEL CSCE
BRUSSELS ALSO FOR USEU

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BAKU FOR DCM FINN

E.O. 12356: DECL: 05/17/00

TAGS: PHUM PREL PREL HR

SUBJECT: HEIGHTENED FEARS OF "SECTOR WEST" SERBS AFTER
BEATINGS IN DETENTION CENTERS

11. CONFIDENTIAL - ENTIRE TEXT.

12. SERBS LIVING AROUND PAKRAC, IN SECTOR WEST, ARE INCREASINGLY CONCERNED OVER WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS IN STORE FOR THEM, ESPECIALLY AFTER HEARING STORIES AND SEEING EVIDENCE OF MISTREATMENT OF FELLOW SERBS IN CROATIAN DETENTION CENTERS. DURING A MAY 16 VISIT TO THE AREA, SERBS WHO HAD BEEN HELD IN THE VARAZDIN DETENTION CENTER TOLD POLOFFS STORIES OF RANDOM BEATINGS AND HARASSMENT. DETAINEES WERE REPORTEDLY FORCED TO SIT FOR HOURS IN CRAMPED POSITIONS, SING CROATIAN PATRIOTIC SONGS, AND ORDERED UP AND DOWN THROUGHOUT THE NIGHT MAKING IT IMPOSSIBLE TO SLEEP. PEOPLE AVOIDED USING THE TOILET FACILITIES FOR FEAR OF BEATEN.

13. ONE MAN TOLD OF HAVING TO KNEEL WITH HIS HANDS BEHIND HIS HEAD AND BEING QUESTIONED ABOUT HIS FAMILY BACKGROUND. WHEN, IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION, HE SAID HE HAD BEEN A PARTISAN IN WWII, HE WAS PUNCHED IN THE RIBS. ANOTHER MAN WAS KICKED FOR FAILING TO EAT THE HALF LOAF OF BREAD HE WAS GIVEN (HE HAD NO WATER WITH WHICH TO WASH IT DOWN).

14. BOTH MEN RAISED THEIR SHIRTS TO SHOW THEIR TORSOS, ARMS AND LEGS STILL COVERED WITH LARGE BRUISES. OTHER MEN
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WE SPOKE WITH CLAIMED TO HAVE BEEN BEATEN, BUT TO A FAR LESSER DEGREE. SEVERAL OTHERS ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THEY HAD NOT BEEN BEATEN AT ALL. THE BEATINGS APPEARED TO HAVE FOLLOWED NO PATTERN AND WERE SOLELY TO INTIMIDATE.

15. THERE WAS GENERAL AGREEMENT AMONG THOSE WITH WHOM WE SPOKE THAT THE TREATMENT DETAINEES IN BJELOVAR HAD BEEN "CORRECT." HOWEVER, THEY TOLD US THAT THERE HAD BEEN SEVERE BEATINGS AND MISTREATMENT OF PRISONERS ON ONE OF THE TWO BUSES WHICH HAD BROUGHT PRISONERS BACK TO PAKRAC FROM BJELOVAR EARLY THAT MORNING. WE WERE UNABLE TO SPEAK TO ANY OF THESE INDIVIDUALS TO OBTAIN DETAILS OR CONFIRM THE STORY.

16. SERB LEADER VELJKO DZAKULA TOLD US HE BELIEVED THAT, "IF IT WERE NOT FOR VARAZDIN," MANY OF THE SERBS REMAINING IN "SECTOR WEST" WOULD BE INCLINED TO STAY IN CROATIA. HE HAD BEEN TRYING TO PERSUADE PEOPLE TO STAY BUT NOW WAS BEGINNING TO THINK THAT "THE CROATS DO NOT WANT THE SERBS TO REMAIN." HE FELT THAT A GUARANTEE THAT A SIZEABLE UN FORCE (PREFERABLY ONE INCLUDING AMERICANS) WOULD REMAIN IN AREA WAS KEY.

17. EXCEPT FOR DZAKULA, NONE OF THE DOZEN OR SO SERBS WITH WHOM WE SPOKE WAS INCLINED TO STAY BEHIND. IN MANY CASES, THEY HELD BACK ONLY BECAUSE THEY HAD RELATIVES WHO WERE STILL MISSING AND WERE UNCERTAIN OF WHAT PROPERTY THEY WOULD BE ALLOWED TO TAKE WITH THEM. A FARMER FROM PAKRAC WHO HAD LOST ALL OF HIS STOCK AND FARM BUILDINGS DURING THE 1991 WAR SAID HE AND HIS FAMILY WOULD BE PREPARED TO LEAVE CROATIA IMMEDIATELY IF HE THOUGHT HE COULD TAKE HIS
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TRACTOR (WHICH HAD NEVER BEEN PROPERLY REGISTERED) WITH
HIM.

18. A YOUNG MAN, WHO HAD BEEN HELD IN VARAZDIN BUT NOT BEATEN, DESCRIBED WHAT HE FELT WERE EXTREMELY BLEAK CAREER PROSPECTS IN CROATIA FOR PEOPLE LIKE HIMSELF (HE HAD RECEIVED TECHNICAL SCHOOL TRAINING IN ELECTROMECHANICS). ONE OF THE MEN SEVERELY BEATEN IN VARAZDIN WAS STILL WAITING FOR WORD OF HIS SON WHO HAD YET TO BE RELEASED. PEOPLE HAD LIVED IN THE NORTHERN HALF OF THE SECTOR BEFORE THE 1991 WAR SAW NO POINT IN RETURNING TO HOMES THAT WERE NOW RUBBLE AND AN UNCERTAIN RECEPTION FROM THEIR FORMER NEIGHBORS.

19. COMMENT: WE ARE INCLINED TO THINK THAT THE BEATINGS AND MISTREATMENT DESCRIBED ABOVE WERE CARRIED OUT INDEPENDENTLY AND IN CONTRAVENTION OF THE WISHES AND INSTRUCTIONS OF THE GOC. NEVERTHELESS, THEY GIVE SERIOUS CAUSE FOR CONCERN, ESPECIALLY FOR THE WELFARE OF DETAINEES WHOSE WHEREABOUTS ARE UNKNOWN AND WHOM THE CROATS MAY SUSPECT OF HAVING COMMITTED WAR CRIMES. FROM OUR CONVERSATIONS, IT IS CLEAR THAT THE GOC WILL HAVE TO DO MORE THAN JUST PROMISE SECURITY AND EQUAL TREATMENT UNDER

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ACTION EUR-01

INFO	LOG-00	AID-00	AMAD-01	CIAE-00	SMEC-00	OASY-00	EB-01
	FBIE-00	H-01	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-08	L-01	ADS-00
	M-00	NSAE-00	OIC-02	OMB-01	PA-01	PM-00	PRS-01
	P-01	SCT-00	SP-00	SR-00	SS-00	STR-01	TRSE-00
	T-00	USIE-00	SNIS-00	NISC-01	PMB-00	PRME-01	PRMC-01
	DRL-09	G-00		/032W			

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P 171736Z MAY 95
FM AMEMBASSY ZAGREB
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5813
INFO HQ JTF PP NAPLES IT//CA/POLAD//
SECDEF WASHDC//ISA/ISP//
AMCONSUL MUNICH
USLO SKOPJE
AMEMBASSY BAKU
AMEMBASSY LJUBLJANA
USMISSION USVIENNA
USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
NATO EU COLLECTIVE
NSC WASHDC
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

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THE LAW IF IT TRULY WISHES "SECTOR WEST" SERBS TO REMAIN
IN CROATIA. GUARANTEES THAT THEY CAN RETURN TO THEIR OLD
JOBS AND A PROGRAM OF ASSISTANCE TO REBUILD THEIR HOMES
(ALONG THE LINES OF WHAT WILL CERTAINLY BE OFFERED
CROATIAN DISPLACED RETURNING TO THE SECTOR) MIGHT BE A
START.

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